

## **Special Education Subcommittee Meeting**

June 18, 2015 - 10AM – 12:00PM

Conference Line: 650-429-3300

Room Code: 630 166 665

Ounce of Prevention Fund

Training Room North, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor

33 W. Monroe Suite 2400

Chicago, Illinois 60603

**Attendees:** Karen Berman, Alli Lowe-Fotos, Donna Nylander, Jeanette McCollum, Margie Harkness, Madelyn James, Charlie Wysong, Amy Zimmerman, Evelyn Green, Kristy Doan, Cindy Zumwalt, Lynn Barts, Alicia Siani, Kathy Slattery, Joyce Senters, Chelsea Guillen, Theresa Forthofer, Kathy Hill

### **I. Welcome and Introduction**

Karen Berman, Ounce of Prevention Fund, welcomed participants. Participants introduced themselves to the room.

### **II. Approve minutes from 4/8/15 Meeting**

No changes were made or requested. Karen asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Margie Harkness made a motion to approve and Donna Nylander seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **III. Budget Update**

Karen gave an update about the state budget as it related to children with disabilities. The General Assembly has passed their spending plan, but the state is still awaiting a finalized budget. Karen acknowledged how challenging it is for agencies to work in such uncertain times and asked for questions, concerns, and stories from the field of what they are being told or how it is affecting their programs.

Theresa Forthofer reported that the Easter Seals in Peoria is looking to close their CFCs. Easter Seals Dupage and Fox Valley are looking at whether they will have to eliminate services to Medicaid eligible families. Amy Zimmerman asked if the Bureau has communicated any instructions to them. Theresa said the Bureau is not considering emergency funding if a budget is not passed on time. She has another meeting with them on Monday.

Karen further clarified that the original proposed eligibility requirement change is not in the proposal from the General Assembly and is currently not being discussed.

Alli Lowe-Fotos asked the members to send stories of what's happening in the field as they hear them so that the Ounce can compile information to use in their advocacy efforts.

### **IV. Award of Excellence Update**

Jeannette McCollum and Donna Nylander gave an update on the Awards of Excellence (AoE). All 5 of the Awards are up and running and the work of the coaches and evaluators has been very energetic and collaborative. The Award of Excellence for Inclusion of Children with Special Needs was the first to receive submissions – a total of 9 were received. May 8<sup>th</sup> was the first portfolio submission of anyone in a cohort that was ready and had sent in the pre-application. Last week, a statewide advisory panel met and reviewed the submissions, then gave their recommendations to representatives from the Governor's Office and the IAT, where they will now be reviewed. The programs will be notified of the awards soon and a reception will be at the Sharing a Vision conference in September in Springfield.

They have learned a lot from the process so far. The panel felt that it went really well and that the tools and strategies are effective and useful. Jeannette did a great job of setting up the guidelines, procedures, and forms. Jeannette said they will be doing some follow-up evaluation with the program administrators and teachers to talk about how process went for them. Then they can make changes or improvements to the process as needed.

Donna said they are hoping to follow a second track with programs that aren't quite ready to apply yet. It will be more of a support track with the coaches. Any program who would like to apply for this track should contact OECD as they are recruiting now.

Donna and Pam Reising Rechner will be presenting about the awards at the QRIS national conference. Jeannette also presented at the National Inclusion Institute. Donna thanked Margie Harkness for the collaboration with and funding from ICDD to support the trainings on the Inclusive Classroom Profile. Margie said that this is the type of systems impact work they want to support and is glad to hear that it is having a positive impact. Karen mentioned that she is hearing a lot of good buzz from other states about our AoE.

Amy Zimmerman asked how the AoEs relate to CCDBG. Karen said that states can decide for themselves how to define special needs and how to prioritize those children for access to high quality child care. The new rules give more clarity about addressing the needs of children with disabilities. States need to be reporting monthly on the number of children with disabilities who are enrolled with a child care subsidy. The AoE for Inclusion provides a great framework for IL to define high quality programs for children with disabilities under CCDBG.

## **V. Draft of DOE/HHS Inclusion Statement**

Karen presented the DOE/HHS Inclusion Statement draft to ask the Subcommittee their thoughts and if anyone had any question or comments. There are policy recommendations for all different levels for systems building as well as state-level recommendations. Others may be looking to our Subcommittee to make remarks.

Amy Zimmerman brought up that with the emphasis on inclusion, we could consider mapping the resources available to programs to be able to serve children with disabilities. We want the child care centers to get the AoE, but many of them don't have the resources. How do we advocate for this?

Joyce Senters asked that we consider the transition pieces. Often, there are services in place, but the transition, whether from services during the day or from program to program, is not in place. Staff on both sides of the transition should be involved and work together.

Theresa gave an example from her child care center at Easter Seals that in order to be fully inclusive, they have to double the number of staff. They are privately funded and able to do this, but in working with other child care centers, children who transition to those programs with a higher staff to child ratio have a difficult time. These other centers don't have the resources to add staff or train the ones they do have.

Karen suggested that our Subcommittee discuss the draft statement more in-depth at the next meeting. Donna suggested sending it to Early Choices to have them review it, make recommendations, and bring it back to the group (reach out to Ann Kremer). Karen asked that if other groups are also looking at it, to talk to our contacts there and review all comments.

## **VI. Child Find Screening Data**

Kathy Hill presented about her Child Find Project, specifically about the 0-5 screening data collection responsibilities. She has been compiling data and generating quarterly and yearly screening reports since 1998. The system was developed to get an idea of where screenings were occurring in the state. 25 CFCs across the state gather this data monthly from school districts, child care providers, Head Start, and other entities who conduct screenings and send it to Kathy. Cornerstone, which includes health departments, health clinics, DCFS wards, WIC and family case management, also send her screening data quarterly. She also gets data from the Erikson DCFS early childhood intact program. Kathy then compiles data and generates reports, which are forwarded back to ISBE, DHS, DCFS, the City of Chicago district 299 office, and the Erikson intact program. Karen stated that we wanted to highlight this data collection to ask the question as to how people are able to use this information. Is the information collected in order to send to the federal government? Kathy said that the entities who receive the reports review them and file them for future reference and it is not sent to the federal government, nor is it required.

Lynn Barts highlighted that the Innovation Zone in East St. Louis recently hosted a Child Find training. They highlighted the new MOU's through Excelerate and they noticed that the CFC MOU informs child care providers to send in screening collection forms into their CFC office, but the LEA MOU encourages providers to send them into the local district. This is confusing.

Alli asked about duplicated versus unduplicated numbers. Kathy said that the CFCs and LEAs are working together pretty well and are supposed to coordinate; however, they probably are getting

some duplicates. Kathy agreed that the MOUs may be creating confusion and that the CFCs and LEAs need to work together to decide how they are reporting. Joyce highlighted that this is not always happening out in the field as some counties have different understandings about what their responsibilities are with screening 0-3, such as in Kane and DuPage counties. Lynn seconded that the confusion seems to be happening all over the state. These questions can be directed to DHS and ISBE to address.

Amy and Alli asked about the data on referrals. Lynn clarified our questions that it seems that some programs are not fully reporting the referrals versus no referrals. Kathy verified that some programs don't fill in this information on the data collection sheet. Lynn also highlighted programs interpret what "referral" means differently (just give the family a phone number versus contact EI themselves, etc). There needs to be continued education on this.

Lynn said that their Innovation Zone added a few categories to the data collection sheet (such as home visiting) that they are piloting this year and will analyze this process/collection and report it out at the end of the year. Amy asked if they have been able to track live births being screened and Kathy said they were not.

Karen posed to the group what we as a State are doing or want to do with this information. Alli said that this is a tremendous amount of work on the part of all the people gathering the data as well as Kathy's work, and it presents a great opportunity. Karen mentioned some examples of how we could use the data to analyze our services: Easter Seals could fill in gaps where children are not being screened by Child Find, also finding out where the medical community is engaged.

Theresa highlighted that Easter Seals engages all children, not just those at risk. They do report their data to the appropriate CFC. They are trying to go to the next step with the child care providers in DuPage county; however they just launched their project and are still very new. They are one small affiliate, and a lot of it is manual right now. As they engage more day care centers, the work will become more challenging. They are hoping to work with more researchers to improve data collection. They want to track the children who are identified early, receive services, and then where they end up to compare it to the children who aren't identified early or don't get services. They want to be able to show the impact of EI. They also want to engage more with the medical community.

Kathy suggested that her office could do a mass mailing to medical practitioners in the state. Margie Harkness said that sometimes mass mailings tend to get lost at the front office. Theresa however said that the doctors in Dupage still like things by fax. Lynn also suggested linking pediatricians to the standardized reporting form on CFC website.

Amy talked about the Packard Grant that her organization received around developmental screening and that they should overlap with Kathy and this work with the medical community. Amy has also talked to HFS (Julie Doetsch), and they collect Medicaid data on screenings. One thing they are

lacking is a better idea of what is happening in the different parts of the state and where Medicaid reimbursement is going well. After this data is collected, they could focus their outreach more.

Karen talked about the health recommendations from the SIAC Health Subcommittee and how the work is shifting to how ECE can better engage with health providers. She suggested that instead of focusing on a mass distribution, we should focus on engagement and building relationships with the medical community. Amy highlighted an idea of working with the doctors' electronic records systems: building in opportunities for resources and referrals within those systems, talking to the companies that design these systems and have them change/update their templates.

Lynn asked Kathy if a possible way to analyze the data is to see where screenings are happening. With the exception of Chicago, the screening report will show how many screenings are reported per CFC. For the referral section, not all entities are completing the referral count section. Karen again pointed out that it's only important that places are reporting the data if we can actually use it. Lynn highlighted that the LEAs currently don't receive the report and that could be one first step. Kathy said she could post it on the website. Karen again said that it's not just about sending the info out, but to think about how we are reporting it and how we want to use it.

Karen suggested an ad hoc work group to analyze the report/data and make recommendations and others on the Subcommittee liked this idea. Chelsea Guillen wanted to make sure all the right people are included and that work isn't being duplicated by other groups. Cindy said that the group could bring the recommendations to the IAT. Karen agreed with both that because the Subcommittee is public-private, that we make sure to include all the agencies from the beginning.

## **VII. Next Steps**

People who are interested in participating in the ad hoc work group should email Alli. Alli will also remind people by email when she sends out the minutes.

Donna will reach out to Ann Kremer at Early Choices, and then the Subcommittee will further discuss the DOE/HHS draft statement at next the meeting.

The next meeting will be 8/13, location TBD. We are still planning on rotating the meeting locations to make them easier for all to attend. The next one will most likely be at an Easter Seals location through Teresa and Alli will coordinate with her and send out the info to the Subcommittee.